

January 11, 2010

Legislative Update 2010



Iowa Department of Human Services

Special points of interest:

- * Welcome Back & Preview
- * Senate Confirmation
- * DHS Legislative Priorities
- * Legislative Health Care Coverage Commission
- * Coffees with Charlie
- * Legislators Visit Facilities
- * Director Krogmeier Visits Mt. Pleasant MHI

Inside this issue:

Coffees with Charlie	2
Health Care Commission	2
Legislative Reports	2
Legislative Visit Facilities	3
Meet New Liaison	3
Mr. Pleasant	3
DHS Pre-file Bills	4

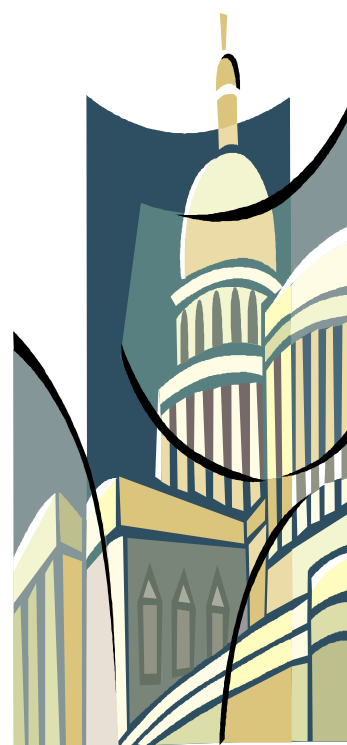
Welcome Back and First Week Preview

The Iowa General Assembly will begin work on January 11th and the stage is set for a very unique Session. Legislators have shortened the Session calendar dramatically, by 20 days less than normal, in order to save money. The targeted ending date is set for March 31st, only 80 working days after Session begins. In fact, the first "funnel deadline" is only five weeks after the start of the Session.

Legislators face many challenges this Session including crafting a state budget with dramatically reduced revenues. Many are calling this budget situation one of the most difficult in recent memory. I'm sure that Legislators will give it their best efforts and meet the challenge.

Because this is the second year of a two-year cycle Legislators pick up where they left last year with the same seats and many bills awaiting action in subcommittees. The Governor makes his "Condition of the State" address on Tuesday, January 12th at 10:00 a.m. in the House Chamber. You can watch Iowa Public Television (IPTV) that evening at 7:00 p.m. for full coverage. The Chief Justice of the Iowa Supreme Court will also address the Legislature this week with her "Condition of the Judiciary" address on Wednesday, January 13th.

Director Krogmeier is on the Senate Human Resources Committee agenda this week on Thursday, January 14th at 10:30 a.m. in Room 22.



Senate Confirmation

Charlie Krogmeier was an interim appointment by Governor Culver. Therefore, he must face the process of Senate Confirmation for a Governor's Appointee. This process includes an introduction before a Senate Committee, assignment to a subcommittee of three Senators (two Democ-

rats and one Republican) for further "investigation", and completion of a "questionnaire" that inquires about his background. Senator Amanda Ragan, chair of the Senate Human Resources Committee, has invited Charlie to speak at their very first hearing. We will not know until

later whether his nomination is placed on the "individual" or the "en bloc" calendar in the Senate. It requires more than a simple majority for Senate confirmation. It takes the support of 34 of 50 Senators. Charlie is seeking the support of all 50 Senators and hopes for a bi-partisan conversation.

Coffees with Charlie

"Please join me in the conversation about how we maintain critical safety net services in these times of increasing economic hardships and declining state revenues."

With that statement, we announce the kick-off of a small, but sincere outreach effort with stakeholders. Director Krogmeier will host a Wednesday morning coffee during Session at his office for small groups (six individuals) who are partners or stakeholders in providing human services across Iowa. The goal of the coffees is to strengthen communications with an exchange of information among stakeholders and learn from the Director about current issues. The coffees will be held on Wednes-

days from 8:00-9:00 a.m. at the DHS Director's Office on the 5th Floor of the Hoover Building, (NW corner) at 1305 E. Walnut Street. Spots are limited and reservations are required by contacting Linda Miller, Director's Secretary at 515-281-5452. These coffees are modeled on the "Breakfast for Iowans" that Senator Harkin hosts each week in Washington for Iowans visiting the US Capitol.



Legislative Health Care Coverage Commission

"I've worked with a lot of Medicaid Directors and you are at the top" said Dr. Carlyle, Chair of the Commission, to Jennifer Vermeer (State Medicaid Director) when thanking her for her work this past year on the Commission.

The Commission met on January 6th and voted on a progress report (available on the Iowa General Assembly website). Senator Hatch and Representative Smith announced at the meeting that they have drafted a

health care bill that will move "very quick" and will likely start in the Iowa House. Expect the Commission to continue to meet during the Session and react to the Hatch/Smith bill draft and to the final version of the federal health care legislation. Jennifer will continue to serve on this Commission and be a key player in the analysis of expanded health care in Iowa.



**"I've worked with a lot of Medicaid Directors and you are at the top."—
Dr. David Carlyle
about Jennifer
Vermeer, State
Medicaid Director**

Legislative Reports

The week preceding December 15th was a busy time in the policy division at DHS. Final touches were put on a long list of legislative-mandated reports as we strived to meet submission deadlines of December 15th. Obviously many staff people have committed long hours and hard work all year to complete the reports due at the end of the year. Some of the topics of reports DHS submitted this year included; child abuse, child care

providers, independent living services, substance abuse by parents and correlation with child maltreatment, mental health institute closure and consolidation, child support recovery, food assistance, lean government.



Legislators Visit DHS Facilities

Face-to-face discussions with legislators at our facilities so that they can learn about the facilities, our dedicated staff, the services we provide and the individuals whom we serve are priceless experiences for everyone involved. It should be a top priority for us to make

sure that legislators know that they are welcome to visit with us at any time. In December Representatives Willems and Mascher visited Toledo and Representative Schulte visited Eldora. I'm sure many other legislators make these visits and I regret that I may not be able to acknowledge

them in this current newsletter. We appreciate their efforts and hope for more visits in the coming year.



Did you know?

In 2009 DHS completed 2,025 Requests for Information from Legislators, Congressional Offices, the Governor's Office and others.

Meet the New DHS Legislative Liaison

Julie Fleming, is the new Legislative Liaison for DHS. She has a Bachelor's degree from Illinois State University with a major in Political Science and a minor in Sociology. She worked as a legislative analyst for the Illinois House of Representatives for two years and for the Iowa House of Representatives for one year. She was recruited to move to the Iowa Attorney General's Office where she served as their Legislative Liaison for nearly ten years. During this time she worked directly with

Charlie Krogmeier on policy and budget issues. She left the Attorney General's Office to start her own business where she did contract lobbying for various associations and groups for seven years. Some of her clients included the Iowa County Attorneys Association, the Iowa Corrections Association, the Iowa Psychological Association, AFSCME and others. She transitioned from direct lobbying to public policy communications and spent five years working for various interest

groups impacting public policy in Iowa. Julie wants to publicly thank previous liaisons including Kate Walton, Molly Kottmeyer and Karla Fultz-McHenry for their advice and support. Julie further notes that "It is an interesting journey to move from being a sole proprietor, working in a home office with my dog by my side, to an organization with nearly 6,000 employees. Thank you to everyone who is helping me to understand and articulate our mission."

Director Krogmeier Talks with Mt. Pleasant Staff about Closure Report

Director Krogmeier and Legislative Liaison Julie Fleming visited with Mt. Pleasant staff in December about the legislative-mandated report to recommend closure and consolidation of services of one mental health institution. AFSCME President Danny Homan joined the Director in the discussion with staff. Obviously this is a challenging situation for the staff at Mt. Pleasant. They talked about their

pride in the delivery of services and their efforts to be efficient. This is an issue that will be debated and discussed by the Legislature. Updates will be provided.



Iowa Department of Human Services

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The Mission of the Iowa Department of Human Services is to help individuals and families achieve safe, stable, self-sufficient, and health lives, thereby contributing to the economic growth of the state. We do this by keeping a customer focus, striving for excellence, sound stewardship of state resources, maximizing the use of federal funding and leveraging opportunities, and by working with our public and private partners to achieve results.

www.dhs.state.ia

DHS Pre-filed Bills

The Department has been working on draft legislation in the following areas:

- Reorganization Authority
- Child Support
- Community Mental Health Centers
- MHMRDDBI Commission Duties
- IowaCare Clean-up

More details in future newsletters.

